DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 869 JC 940 537

AUTHOR Mellander, Gustavo A.
TITLE The Community College Experience in the United States.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; College Curriculum; *College Role; *Community Colleges; *Educational History; Higher Education; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

An overview is first provided of the community college in the United States. Introductory comments provide a brief description of the "discovery," exploration, and settling of the Americas. Next, a discussion is provided of the purpose of higher education in the United States, noting the fragmenting effects of local control and the lack of an unambiguous and fully accepted statement of the purposes of U.S. higher education. After examining the influences of European educational models on higher education, and particularly community colleges, in the U.S., the paper explores the beginnings of the nation's community colleges. Factors making the Western United States a compatible climate for community colleges are discussed, along with problems facing the early communities colleges. The Truman Commission on Higher Education and the G.I. Bill are discussed as major factors in the expansion of access to higher education and the growth of community colleges nationwide. The unique purposes of community colleges are discussed next, with respect to: (1) their orientation toward serving their community and its needs; (2) their role as a link between high schools and universities; and (3) their responsibility for students' individual development. Factors coalescing in opposition to the community college movement are discussed next, including competition for students, funding, educational elitism, and university reluctance to accept transfer students. A brief review of the characteristics of today's community colleges is followed by guidelines on starting a community college, covering the appointment of a citizens' committee, needs assessment studies, information dissemination to the public, winning support for establishing a college in elections, and governance. An appendix looks at the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and its potential impact on community colleges and their approaches to learning and work. (KP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 375 869

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Mellander

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Gustavo A. Mellander
Dean
Graduate School of Education
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

© 1994

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

JC 940 537

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Evolving a Purpose for Higher Education in the United States	4
European Influences	5
Community Colleges - The Beginning	7
Obstacles and Opposition Faced in Establishing Community Colleges	10
Enrollment in Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges: 1936-1987 (*Table*)	18
Guidelines on How to Get Started: Variety Is The Spice of Life	19
Appendix A	25
The Future: A Whole New Approach to Work and Learning	25
The Grant-Making Process	26
How Community Colleges Can Benefit From The Law	28
Activities Already Underway	30

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

As I am sure you all know, there has been a lot of controversy recently in both North and South America about whether Christopher Columbus "discovered" the Americas or whether it is more proper to characterize his visit as an "encounter."

Be that as it may, there are many indications that Nordic people and others explored what is now the United States, long before Columbus made his first trip in 1492. Once he arrived, it was the Spanish and not the British who first began to populate the Americas. By 1520, the Spanish had a foothold, not only in the Caribbean, but in Mexico as well, and the conquest of the South American Inca Empire was not far behind.

Shortly thereafter, the legendary Juan Ponce de Leon, a former governor of Puerto Rico, explored the Florida peninsula in search of the Fountain of Youth. The Spanish also established St. Augustine in Florida in 1565, and it is generally accepted as the oldest continuing settlement in what is now the United States of America.

It wasn't until 1607, that a group of British investors established Jamestown in Virginia. Later, another expedition headed for what is now the Virginia and

Carolinas coastline, was blown off-course and landed, instead, in Massachusetts. The place -- the now famous Plymouth Rock. The year was 1620.

Those early settlers were industrious and hard-working individuals who also appreciated the necessity for education. It is well to note that by the year 1640, a mere 20 years after Europeans arrived in what is now Massachusetts, Harvard University was founded. At that time it was primarily a training school for young men preparing for one of the traditional professions, the ministry being the predominant one. Its greatness as one of the world's preeminent universities would develop as the years passed and its beginnings can clearly be traced back to 1640.

For many years, particularly in the Eastern United States, private higher education was the predominant provider. Many fine institutions were established during the 18th and 19th centuries. The national government did not play a significant role until the American Civil War, during the 1860s, when the Morrill Act was passed and signed by Abraham Lincoln which established landgrant universities. From that date on, many colleges and universities, particularly in the central and western part of the nation, were established on what used to be federal land.

Evolving a Purpose for Higher Education in the United States

Many elements forged the new nation. Among them were the vastness of the American continent, the frenzy to conquer its riches in a movement ever westward, the American instinctive distrust of a strong national central government, the desire to separate church and state, and the extremely strong

desire to foster and protect local control of education. The latter, local control of education, is still very entrenched and fiercely defended. From the earliest days each state was allowed and insisted upon developing its educational system as it deemed best. Further, within each state, political sub-divisions and regions developed as they wished. Local control of education became and continues to be a hallmark of the American system. (In California, there are over 90 community college districts for 106 colleges and over 1000 kindergarten through twelfth grade school districts).

For all these reasons, it is not surprising to note that America has had a fragmented educational system. There never has been an unambiguous and fully accepted statement of the purposes of higher education in the United States. However, given the mindset of the American population, there has been since the earliest days a growing belief, almost a religious tenet, that higher education should be an instrument for human betterment. Secondly, reflecting the groundswell support for democracy, there grew a belief that higher education should be available to all. There was an evolving concept that colleges should not be apart from and, most assuredly, not superior to the rest of society. Where they were, it was felt they should change. Therefore, the desire that colleges should admit not just a select few and that they should attempt to meet the needs of all, began to grow early in the American experience.

European Influences

Since the United States is a product of Europe, it is not surprising to discern European influences in the American community colleges. We can begin with the tenets of Cardinal Newman as detailed in his Idea of the University. His ideal

graduate was to be a man (and he did mean males) "of action in harmony with his environment and with his society." Not simply a scholar who concentrated on the life of the mind.

Alfred North Whitehead proposed that the dual purpose of education was both cultural enhancement and the acquiring of expert knowledge. He defined cultural enhancement as "activity of thought and receptiveness to beauty and humane feelings." Expert knowledge included both specialization and the ability to apply the expertise to practical ends. A merely well-informed man, he suggested, was "the most useless boor on God's earth." In summary, he believed that knowledge unrelated to proper application was "inert."

Neither Whitehead nor Newman rejected classical education. After all, both of them were outstanding examples of its best potential. However, they insisted, half a century apart, that a fundamental purpose of higher education was the improvement of the quality of human life. That is an underlying tenet of community colleges as well.

As we entered the 19th Century, there was considerable interest in European universities, the German and the British models, especially. Many of the so-called "best families" sent their children, specifically their young boys, to study at European universities. They were also "the models" for American universities, many of which remained very "elitist." It is estimated that only 8% of high school graduates went on to universities in 1900. That figure is all the more significant when it is remembered that well over half of all individuals who entered first grade never graduated from high school. Many youngsters, male and female, left school to work. To attend college was a rare privilege afforded the financially secure and

the intellectually gifted. Clearly, tens of thousands of competent individuals were never served, never allowed to reach their academic potential.

Community Colleges - The Beginning

Community colleges now exist in every state and enroll nearly half of the students who begin college in America. They grew out of the junior college concept. Interestingly, they found their most compatible climate early on in the West, most notably, in California. One reason may have been that many democratic ideals were practiced and implemented from the very beginning in the western states. Not only were the masses seeking to participate and live in a democratic society but the absence of a traditional, elite "upper class" permitted them to assume positions of power and influence.

Further, democratization advances such as women's suffrage and other major reforms in the electoral process were first implemented in the western states. Education would be "democratized" and made available to all as well. There was also a distrust of the eastern United States and a pioneering "can do" spirit in the West. The western expansion of the community college may also be attributed to the fact that during the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, while colleges sponsored by religious institutions and private philanthropists grew strong elsewhere, the West had not yet been settled. Therefore, it could not and did not benefit from that earlier movement. By the time it was populated it founded its own higher education models -- more democratic, less elitist, more clearly focused on local needs.

It was much easier for publicly-supported institutions to advance where there was little competition from the private sector. Given the expense of sending

students across a continent, a growing pride in the West and the fact that from half to two-thirds of all high school graduates could not meet university admissions requirements all added to the growing question. How could their students be best served?

There were pressures in the Mid-West as well. As more students wished to pursue higher education, there was also a perceived need to relieve the established universities throughout the nation of "freshman and sophomore pressures." In 1851, Henry Tappan, President of the University of Michigan, and in 1896, William Folwell, President of the University of Minnesota, both called for institutions that would take high school graduates to the entry point of university studies in the professions and higher learning. Those institutions to were provide the first two years of university training. They were named "junior colleges" and truly were. They offered the basic "general education core." Professional training would be offered at "senior colleges," the last two undergraduate years at the university.

In the 1890s, under the visionary leadership of William Rainey Harper, the President of the University of Chicago, the junior college concept grew further. Dr. Harper also believed that there was a population of youngsters to be served at two-year institutions where they could cover the first two years of university study. Their purpose was to train individuals, once again primarily men, to transfer to four-year institutions fully prepared to pursue "professional studies."

There were problems from the very beginning. Some four-year colleges and universities refused to accept students who attended these two-year colleges. Further, many who did accept them, would not accept all of their credits. We saw

the sad example of many individuals who, after having spent two years at a junior college, who had received good grades, found themselves now obligated to repeat a series of courses. Such basic courses as English, history, geography, and science, frequently had to be repeated at the universities they attended.

Nevertheless, the movement grew and several junior colleges were established throughout the nation. Many were private, not subsidized at all by either the national or state governments. During the 1930s, while in the throes of the economic depression, federal grants were provided to states across the nation so that they could establish junior colleges. One was even established in the Panama Canal Zone for the children of Americans who were working on the Panama Canal.

Once again, the main purpose of these institutions was to train students so they could transfer to four-year institutions. The vast majority were once again invariably males and they were youngsters...17, 18, 19 years old.

That remained the pattern until after the Second World War. Under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, the Commission on Higher Education was established in 1947. That Commission issued a report that was revolutionary. It demanded that universities no longer be merely instruments for producing an intellectual elite. Instead, the Commission believed that universal education was indispensable to the full and living realization of the democratic ideal. Enabling legislation was passed which encouraged states, regions and municipalities to establish community colleges. The term had already begun to change, although many institutions still called themselves junior colleges, there was a different concept. Basically, these new community colleges were, as the name indicated,

to serve the community. They were also to serve the hordes of returning American veterans who, thanks to the American G.I. Bill of Rights, were able to attend college and have their tuition, books, and incidental expenses paid by the federal government.

This was a revolutionary break-through in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of individuals went to college and the vast majority were from families where none had ever attended college before. The federal government had never been so involved and on such a large scale, with higher education before. Heretofore, it had, with few exceptions, been the domain of individual states or the private sector. But as is true in all countries, "necessity was the mother of invention," and the United States changed the modern community college.

Obstacles and Opposition Faced in Establishing Community Colleges

What are some of the characteristics of American community colleges? Its name itself, gives us a hint. It is a **community** college. It is to serve their **community**, not the state, not the federal government, not individuals from other regions. Most community colleges do not provide residential facilities so most students live at home, saving expensive room and board costs.

Its academic programs reflect the needs of the local community very closely, and it may be that a community college program will be very different from one that exists a mere hundred miles away. Community colleges in Silicon Valley in California, for instance, offer many programs that deal with computers, how to

program them, how to repair them, how to invent the next generation of computers, etc.

American community colleges were also founded to serve as a link between high schools and universities. Collaborative programs between high schools and colleges were encouraged from the very beginning. The course of study also expanded from mere first and second year college courses to a wide range of professional and pre-professional programs. During the '60s, this strong, pragmatic trend became more explicit. It was encouraged not only by scholars who studied higher education but even more forcibly and vocally by students themselves. The demand for participation and development of the curriculum and for relevance in instruction are outgrowths of the philosophy that higher education is a part of life, an agent of society, and not an autonomous creation above and apart from the problems of daily living.

Some have gone so far as to declare that individual development is the first and most important goal of higher education. This is not to deny the importance of other purposes, such as creating and preserving culture and preparing specialists in technical skills or professions. It is simply to say that unless the college accepts the responsibility to teach so that students develop all of their capacities, other efforts of the colleges will be only partially successful.

In spite of the fact that the United States has long been a democratic society, there are still very strong traditions that cannot be classified as democratic. Institutional traditions, university traditions, and societal traditions -- many transplanted from European -- influence the nation. Many coalesced to oppose the community college movement.

1. Many universities opposed the establishment of community colleges because they were perceived to be (a) competition for students, (b) not really providing university-level work. These, of course, are not logically paired, but they were expressed nonetheless. They were also opposed and still are by some universities because in these financially restrictive times, they are perceived as yet another draw upon the public dollar and at times the private dollar.

   Funding has been a ticklish problem. If state funds are to be placed in newly-formed or expanding community colleges and there is no increase of state funds, then clearly, universities and other governmental services might receive less.

   In some states, the universities and community colleges discuss budgetary issues among themselves and agree to joint budget requests to the legislature. They go forth with a single voice and do not compete with one another. In other states, it is open warfare with the state university, the private universities and the community colleges -- all trying to secure the most for their particular sector.

   To bring order out of chaos, some states have adopted higher education Master Plans in an effort to move forward in an agreed-to fashion and hopefully prevent squabbling. The Master Plans have worked well in financially good times -- but far apart in hard times.

2. Unfortunately, since at the beginning, nobody had the experience of attending a community college, persons in positions of power and

authority, all university graduates, were in many cases not sympathetic to the establishment of community colleges. Many educational and business leaders, products of regular universities and colleges, felt strongly that if students were competent, they should go to the same institutions that they had attended...that there was no need to establish new junior or community colleges. This was especially true in the eastern part of the nation -- a part that had been well-served by private universities, by traditional philanthropy, and by well-established and respected public institutions. It is, therefore, not surprising that much of the initial explosive growth took place, as noted earlier, in the West, California to be more specific.

3. There were and still are obstacles from the universities themselves. As I stated earlier, many of them would not accept transfer credits from two-year colleges. By now, however, many of them have well-established articulation agreements to address the issue of transferability. Syllabi, textbook selections, course objectives are frequently studied and ultimately approved jointly by faculty members from community colleges and universities. In some states, such as New Jersey, a "full faith and credit" law has been passed. It guarantees the student full transferability of credits earned at a community college to a state university as long as the student follows the curricula and guidelines previously agreed to by both institutions.

4. Some colleges, particularly in the '60s, were guilty of moving too quickly. The pressure of "baby boomers" (an enormous population increase) forced some colleges to open without careful planning.

Others were more concerned about access, admitting more students each and every semester. In some cases academic quality suffered. "Open admissions" without quality control, unfortunately, led to many students passing through without acquiring the education they should have. As a result, some community colleges suffered from poor image and poor reputations. It is best to plan carefully, secure strong local support, set modest enrollment goals and insist on high academic standards.

5. Sometimes community colleges were established merely by transferring a model from another state. That has invariably been a disaster. Unless the community college reflects the needs of the local district, has generated considerable local support, has a clear plan of action, and is devoted to high academic standards -- it will probably fail. Community colleges cannot be transplanted. They must be home-grown and they must meet the needs of the local constituency.

6. The overwhelmingly true and good news, however, is with the passage of time and certainly with the explosion of community colleges since the Second World War, they have become widely accepted and widely respected.

With the passage of time, many of their graduates have gone on to four-year colleges and universities where they have succeeded admirably. Several research surveys indicate that community college graduates are better students during their last two years at their university studies than those who began their careers as freshmen at

the same university. The nation has many prominent doctors, school teachers, lawyers, and other professionals who began their education at their local community college.

They saved parents the expenses of paying for room and board. It has kept 17 and 18-year-olds who sometimes are not very mature at home for a few more years. They have also served the returning veteran, the recently-divorced individual, the person who is trying to upgrade existing skills or learn new ones, the person who has lost his job and needs to be retrained for another profession -- it has offered all of these and many others an opportunity, a second chance, a second career.

Given the fact that low tuition has been a reality from the very beginning, many more students have been able to attend college. Always sensitive to students' needs, many classes and full programs may be completed while attending on a part-time basis.

7. Colleges have been particularly successful in offering an opportunity to groups heretofore not well served -- such as women, minorities, older adults, the working middle and lower class, and others that heretofore had been denied entrance to higher education. As of the moment, nearly 50% of all individuals in the United States who go to college began their career as students at a local community college.

8. Community colleges have succeeded because they have been extremely sensitive to local needs and they have been flexible in

meeting them. Some community colleges offer courses as early as 6:00 in the morning. The vast majority of them have a very high evening population. Most community colleges don't have any empty classrooms from 6:00 p.m. to past 10:00 p.m. Many of them offer courses on Saturdays and even on Sundays. I knew one community college that was even offering courses at midnight...from midnight until 3:00 in the morning, to meet the needs of the workers of a local factory who got off work at 12:00 midnight and wanted to pursue their education. They would get off work, attend class from midnight until 3:00 in the morning at the factory, and then go home.

9. The most important thing I would like to leave you with is that, as good and as successful as the American community college has been, it is not a cure-all. And it most assuredly is not a cure-all for Hungary or for any other society. It is simply a model...a model which can be studied and, if adopted, changed and reformed to meet the specific needs of Hungary. It should not be transported and transplanted "lock, stock and barrel" because it will simply fail.

* * * * *

There are nearly 1400 community colleges all over the United States. Most offer the first two years of university work for those students who want to transfer to a university. Most also have occupation/vocational programs where students complete a prescribed course of study in six months, a year or two -- or more. Bookkeeping, computer specialists, nurses and other allied health professionals, commercial art, secretarial science, middle-level managers, police and fire

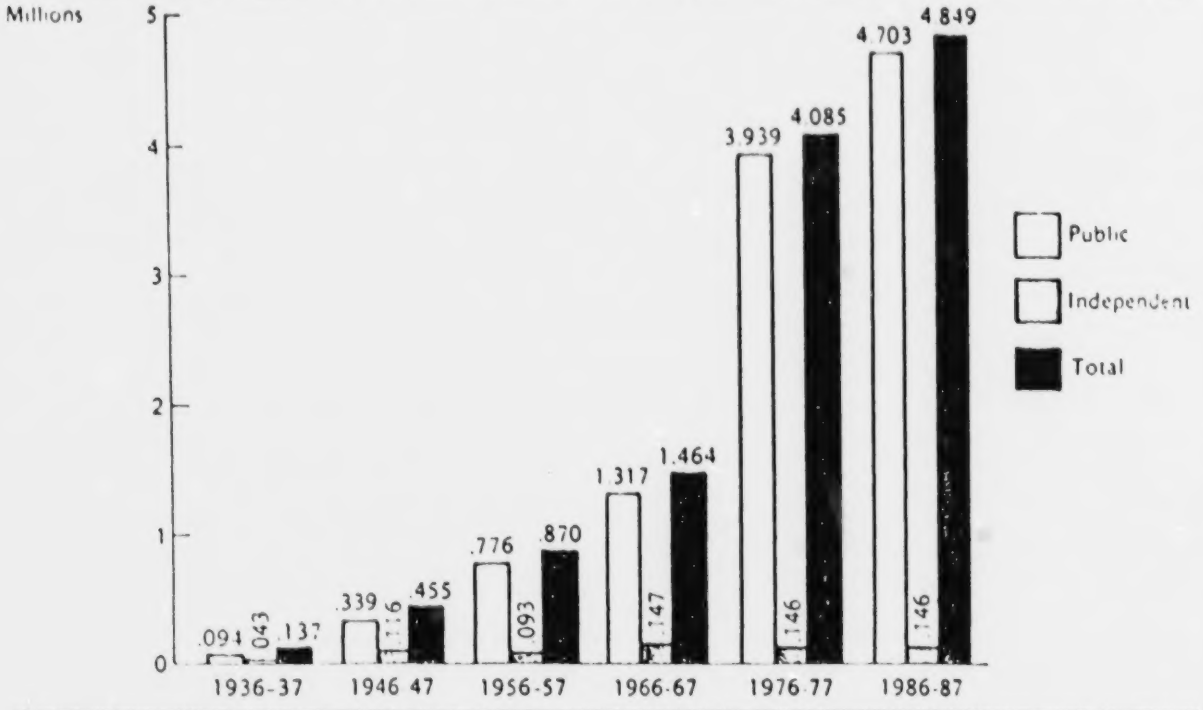
personnel among many others are a few of the areas offered. Shorter programs are also provided for those training to be real estate brokers, culinary professionals, hotel managers, etc.

Most colleges try to maintain a balance between their university transfer programs and their occupational/vocational programs. But once again, they try to meet the needs of their local constituencies. Therefore, in some wealthy districts where most of the parents are university graduates and where there are high expectations for their children, we find community colleges where some 75% of the students are enrolled in the university-transfer programs. In other districts, that percentage may be less than 50%.

The size of the student body varies widely as well. In some, there are less than 500 students. I was the Chancellor/Rector of one district that had two colleges and 35,000 students. There is a district in Los Angeles which has nine colleges and over 100,000 students. Size brings its problems and its advantages.

Colleges that succeed usually have very close ties with the local economic life of the region. Internships, work experience programs, businessmen and industrialists serving on advisory boards to help shape the curriculum for the types of employees they want to hire -- these are all elements of successful community colleges. Of necessity they are changing and evolving. There is nothing set in concrete when it comes to community colleges -- except service to the local citizens.

2 Enrollment in Community, Technical, and Junior Colleges: 1936–37 to 1986–87



✶ Between 1936–37 and 1986–87 enrollments in community, technical, and junior colleges increased over 35 times.[1]

Enrollment in these colleges made the greatest numerical gain between 1966–67 and 1976–77.[2]

Enrollments continued to increase during the last 10 years but at a slower rate—18.7 percent compared to 179.1 percent for the previous decade.

In academic year 1987, there were 32 times as many students enrolled in publicly controlled community, technical, and junior colleges as in independent two-year colleges.

Enrollment in independent two-year colleges peaked at 147,119 in 1966–67. Since that time, enrollment in independent two-year colleges has decreased by 1 percent to 145,500 in 1986–87.

Notes: 1. These figures will differ from data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Center for Education Statistics because of differences in survey methodology.
2. Some of the increase shown in this table may be due to changing enrollment definitions during this period.

Source: AACJC, *Supplement to the AACJC Letter*, no. 234, March 24, 1987, p. 1.

Guidelines on How to Get Started: Variety Is The Spice Of Life

It is important to emphasize over and over again that community colleges, if they are to succeed, must meet the needs of their own individual population and region. There has been a variety of means by which community colleges have been organized in the United States. Most community colleges, however, are now established in their own districts with a local autonomous governing board. In years past, some community colleges were organized as part of a school system and in effect, they were really looked upon as grades 13 and 14 in a number of states. However, that movement has waned and most colleges are fully independent of the local school district. However, in several states, the responsibility for the establishment and the operation of two-year institutions has been placed in the hands of the state universities. The University of Kentucky, for instance, and Pennsylvania State University have two-year centers throughout their particular states.

The variety of community college programs and governance structures may seem to some chaotic and confused, but that is not the case. Successful community colleges simply reflect their local soil. New York State has developed an effective system of community colleges and two-year technical institutes that are under state control. While the City of New York has its own separate system of community colleges under the City University of New York.

The logical conclusion is that what is good for one locale may not be appropriate for another. Much depends on how other higher education institutions in the region are meeting local needs.

More and more states are looking to the total picture -- setting out to determine long-range higher education needs, developing master plans that assign responsibilities to existing institutions and establishing new institutions where needed. These state educational master plans have provided form and direction. A number of states have included such key propositions in their master plan as (a) the need for a network of low tuition commuting colleges to make higher education accessible to all residents, (b) effective articulation between two-year colleges and universities, and (c) close collaboration between the business world and colleges.

Here are some guidelines for starting a community college, based on successful experiences.

1. Appoint a citizens' committee made up of school officials, higher education leaders, and respected lay persons to help garner support for the projected college. Determine with this group the plan to be pursued. Study legislation that exists in states that have successful community colleges. Model laws have been developed and examples of those enacted by numerous states are readily available. The goal is not to copy them intact, but to adapt them to local needs. A wide variety of models exist such as school district community colleges, autonomous community college districts, and community colleges operated under the aegis of the state university. Perhaps a combination that would meet the historic traditions of the region would be sensible. Once again, the local history, the local environment, the local needs and wishes of the population are paramount in establishing a successful community college.

2. Conduct studies of the communities' higher education needs, directed perhaps by the citizens' committee. Or a professional director and staff can be selected. Among areas to be studied are the following:

- Population trends and directions of the area to be served. Survey school teachers and population experts to project potential enrollments. Consult with prominent business and government officials for their vision and needs for the area.
- Study the current college-going population. What percent of youngsters are going to college? What percent of individuals are beyond the traditional college entry age? How many people in their late 20s, and 30s and 40s, would benefit from further formal education?
- Community manpower needs, present and future. Determine by consultation with employers and state experts, the kinds of manpower needed and examine possible curriculums necessary to meet those needs. These could be short-term courses, vocational/occupational programs as well as professional programs. Reflect not only on clear existing needs, but project future development. Establish citizen advisory committees for each profession or occupation. They can help develop curricula, provide internships for students and ultimately employment.
- Financial support. Potential of community support. Community colleges have had either no tuition or very low tuition to be able to serve all students. What kind of tax base would there be for obtaining necessary funds for a college?

What could be expected from the regional, state and national governments?

- Talent needed to manager and operate the college. What teaching and staff resources are available? Can others be trained in a reasonable amount of time?
- Curriculum needs. Aside from the citizen input recommended above, involve university personnel with the planning an consult to determine transfer curricula which would meet their transfer requirements. Secure approval, develop formal, binding agreements to protect the students.
- Needs for campus facilities, both temporary and permanent. Many U. S. colleges began in temporary facilities. High schools, office buildings and even factories have been successfully converted.
- Adult education needs of the community. These could be obtained through polls and surveys. The average age of community college students nationwide is nearly thirty, most work full-time and most attend classes in the evening or on weekends. There is an enormous population to be served. But before it can be served -- its needs must be identified and then students encouraged.

3. Once the committee and study groups have determined the need and the feasibility of establishing a college, the general public should be apprised of the plans, proposals, and the part they must play. Normally, this requires intensive effort and campaigning. Several off-shoot committees should be appointed. All civic groups, business

associations, government entities, educational organizations, media communications, and potential users of the college must be thoroughly acquainted and intimately involved in the creation of a community college. The wider the base, the deeper the involvement -- the better the chances of success.

4. After the public is sufficiently aroused and acquainted with the project, the forces guiding the program may wish to seek an election to approve establishment of the college. A strong indication of popular support will help secure more private and government support. Conversely, if there is little popular support, it would be wise to either (a) re-group and re-intensify the effort or (b) abandon the project.

5. Assuming the voters approve its establishment, steps should be taken immediately to devise a schedule on how, where, and when to open the college. Seize the momentum and proceed.

6. The question of governance should be decided. Many U. S. community colleges have autonomous Board of Trustees who have fiduciary responsibility and academic overview of the college. Some Boards are appointed by government entities and some are elected. They select the college president, approve other appointments, protect, defend and advocate for the college.

In other states, the community colleges are parts of the state university and thus, do not have local governing boards. But

"advisory" boards may exist. In other states, such as Virginia, there is a State Board, appointed by the governor, and a State Chancellor who appoints the local college presidents from recommendations made to him by the local advisory boards.

7. The newly appointed president leads a group to establish college goals, develop curricula, and address operational and organizational structures.

* * * * *

Establishing a college requires long, patient effort on the parts of many individuals. All should be involved. A prominent school leader or layman may be the catalyst to start the process. But many are required to bring a community college into existence and launch it on a successful trajectory.

The Future: A Whole New Approach to Work and Learning

American community colleges were created to be changing and evolving institutions, always ready to seize new opportunities,always eager to serve the "complete person." They still are. Citizens, school people, and government planners have turned to the public community college as a means of extending educational opportunities beyond high school while at the same time meeting new manpower needs. In some states they serve as part of the governor's economic strategy team to launch new businesses or to entice businesses from other states to re-locate. They have been very successful and they have made community colleges a key part of a region's economic development. They train new workers, up-grade existing workers and provide an educational opportunity for the children and family members of those same workers.

President William Clinton signed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act into law in May 1994. He said, "This bill is not the end of a journey. Instead, it's a whole new approach to work and learning."

It is indeed. It is also a landmark, and perhaps a precedent-setting piece of national legislation. It is one of the few pieces of legislation that ties federal funding to the creation of jobs. It also hopes to build close bridges between high schools and community colleges. But as of yet, the "architects" have not been selected, there are neither final nor even preliminary plans, and worst of all, funding is to be a year-by-year decision. It is, therefore, not surprising that the new law and even the phrase "school-to-work transition" has prompted both excitement and concern among community colleges.

A recent article in Community College Week (June 6, 1994) provides a good overview of the roles community colleges might be called upon to play. Much of the following is from that source. I include it virtually verbatim to highlight current changes in the United States that are tying education closer to actual job training skills and ultimate employment.

The Act will offer states and localities $300 million next year for school-to-work transition programs.

Funds could support such activities as:

1. programs that help high school youth move directly into the job market;
2. programs that help high school youth secure postsecondary training that leads to high-paying jobs; and
3. programs to create community-wide responses to unemployment and poverty.

The Grant-Making Process

To access the $300 million, state and local applicants must show that their programs incorporate both school- and work-based learning in a comprehensive education program. States could receive two types of grants.

- A development grant of up to $1 million a year to plan new school-to-work activities. As part of the application process, states must outline how postsecondary education, vocational education, job training, agencies and the private sector will cooperate in this effort.

- A larger implementation grant that would help states fulfill these plans. Funding would be based not on a set formula but on the amount federal officials 'determine to be necessary' to implement a state's proposal.

Upon receiving an implementation grant, state governments may award their own subgrants to local school-to-work partnerships. These could be awarded on a competitive basis, but localities first must set broad goals and recruit from education, labor and the private sector for the effort. Many officials believe two-year colleges can serve as key players because of their experience with the private sector.

"I think community colleges probably have established contacts in our communities to make this work," said Betty DuVall, executive dean at Oregon's Portland Community College-Rock Creek. DuVall has been appointed the nation's first community college liaison officer at the U. S. Department of Education.

Work-based components of the programs are to include: work experience; a planned program of job training; and broad instruction in all aspects of the industries in which the students would work. Paid work experience and school-sponsored business enterprises are also considered eligible activities.

Like the older tech prep program, the new federal effort will blur the line between high school and postsecondary education. "Tech prep prepared us for this," DuVall said, adding that the new program will promote integration of existing job training activities.

To promote flexibility, the law allows the federal government to directly fund local partnerships under some conditions. Many of these grants would flow to high-poverty urban and rural areas identified by the U. S. Department of Education Department and U. S. Department of Labor.

- Ten percent of the allotted funds would go toward high-poverty urban and rural areas, and .5 percent would go toward Native American youth.

- The legislation also requires the departments of Education and Labor to jointly administer the school-to-work law. The two agencies already have convened a high-level task force to work on implementation issues.

How Community Colleges Can Benefit From The Law

Community college people believe that the school-to-work transition is tailor-made for them for it is flexible and innovative.

"All of us have to be innovative," said Walter Timm, executive vice president of Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville, NC, where a school-to-work drive was recently organized. It targets high school students -- but only rarely will they visit the community college. Instead of being called school-to-work, it's referred to as youth apprenticeship.

"It's all part of the umbrella of school-to-work," Timm said. Established for the state's oyster industry, the goal of the program is the same: to transfer students successfully to the world of work.

Under the program, high school students in late summer will begin an intensive eight-day marine biology class taught by a community college instructor at a local high school. The program will continue with 2,000 hours of education and workplace training for these students over a 10-month period -- even as they continue to work toward their high school diploma.

Occasionally, they will visit the community college to tour laboratories or hear from experts. In class, their coursework will cover everything from biology to small business needs to outboard motor maintenance and water safety. The rest of their time will be spent in the field receiving paid apprenticeship training with members of the local waterman's association.

By the time they finish, the students will get a certificate from the college that will show them as qualified to work in the industry.

"It's a very focused program," Timm said. "We're targeting juniors and seniors...while they're working toward a high school diploma."

Such efforts may become commonplace thanks to the new legislation. In anticipation of the federal dollars, North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt has asked the state Legislature to contribute some money for new school-to-work programs, Timm said. "You have to get innovative."

Innovation of a different sort is underway in rural Appalachia, where Prestonsburg Community College in Prestonsburg, KY, is preparing to implement the school-to-work law. The college serves a five-county area where the War on Poverty program began some 30 years ago. "Today, about 50 percent of the area's adult work force is either unemployed or underemployed in minimum-wage jobs," said Prestonsburg President Deborah Floyd.

"The jobs are simply not here," Floyd said. As a result, some of the region's most talented go elsewhere. "We're farming out our best and finest."

Her goal in the new school-to-work program is to establish a one-stop career center where workers can obtain, not only job training, but career advice and support services. She hopes it can offer the type of focused training that will help youths and adults design their own plans.

Job training alone, she said, will not help local residents. "When you participate in job training, there's an assumption that the jobs will be there." But with a one-stop career center, local residents have a central place where they can work with experts to design a job strategy, or explore entrepreneurial opportunities.

For the future, the community also is seeking to develop technology and health care occupations. But that's long term. It won't create jobs in a year.

Activities Already Underway

For most community colleges, planning is crucial -- and a top priority. Though President Clinton just signed the legislation, the Education and Labor

departments have been working on the issue for nearly a year. Congress gave the departments some start-up funds to launch the program under existing budget authorities before the legislation became law.

A recent budget document from the Labor Department said that as many as 52 planning and development grants could go to states this fiscal year. The department has reserved $32 million for such activities, spurring educators and business leaders to begin their planning efforts.

For 1995, the Labor budget documents said the government expects to award another $48 million in state planning grants. But the bulk of the money -- $208.5 million -- would go for the second round of new legislation: state implementation grants.

From its $300 million base, school-to-work also could receive additional funds in future years. A long-range budget forecast added to the president's 1995 budget calls for $400 million in 1996 and again 1997. Funds would remain equally divided between the Education and Labor departments. Total funding would then taper off to $330 million in 1998, and $220 million in 1999, as programs become more entrenched in states and communities. Despite these forecasts, actual funding levels for the program still would be set by annual appropriations bills in the House and Senate.